

48. (New claim) The method of claim 47, wherein the non-organic liquid comprises water.

49. (New claim) The method of claim 47, wherein the non-organic liquid comprises a detergent.

50. (New claim) The method of claim 49, wherein the detergent comprises ionic or non-ionic surfactants.

51. (New claim) The method of claim 50, wherein the ionic or non-ionic surfactants are selected from the group consisting of Triton X-100, Tween, Brij, sodium dodecylsulfate and saponin.

52. (New claim) The method of claim 47 wherein the embedding medium comprises paraffin wax.

53. (New claim) A method of removing embedding medium from a biological sample, the method comprising the steps of:

applying a non-organic liquid to a biological sample; and

heating the biological sample containing embedding medium to a temperature at or above the embedding medium's melting point.

54. (New claim) The method of claim 53, wherein the non-organic liquid comprises water.

55. (New claim) The method of claim 53, wherein the non-organic liquid comprises a detergent.

56. (New claim) The method of claim 55, wherein the detergent comprises ionic or non-ionic surfactants.

57. [New claim] The method of claim 56, wherein the ionic or non-ionic surfactants are selected from the group consisting of Triton X-100, Tween, Brij, sodium dodecylsulfate and saponin.

58. [New claim] The method of claim 53, wherein the embedding medium is paraffin wax.

59. [New claim] An automated method of cell conditioning for deparaffinized or non-embedded biological samples, the method comprising the steps of:
applying at least one cell conditioning reagent; and
applying heat to the biological sample sufficient to effectively expose the epitope and/or target for subsequent detection.

60. [New claim] The automated method of claim 59, wherein the at least one cell conditioning reagent is selected from the group consisting of de-ionized water, citrate buffer (pH 6.0-8.0), Tris-HCl buffer (pH 6-10), phosphate buffer (pH 6.0-8.0), SSC buffer, APK Wash™, acidic buffers or solutions (pH 1-6.9), basic buffers or solutions (pH 7.1-14), mineral oil, Norpar, canola oil, and PAG oil.

61. [New claim] The automated method of claim 59, wherein the at least one cell conditioning reagent contains ionic or non-ionic surfactants selected from the group consisting of Triton X-100, Tween, Brij, sodium dodecylsulfate and saponin.

62. [New claim] The automated method of claim 59 wherein the non-embedded biological samples comprise liquid, cytopsin, or thin-layer cell preparations.

63. [New claim] An automated method of simultaneously removing embedding medium from a biological sample while providing cell conditioning, the method comprising the steps of:

applying deparaffinizing and cell conditioning reagent; and
applying heat to the biological sample to effectively melt the embedding medium and to sufficiently expose the epitope and/or target for subsequent detection.

64. (New claim) The automated method of claim 63, wherein the step of applying heat includes heating the biological sample to temperatures ranging from about 37 °C to about 100 °C.

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65. (New claim) The automated method of claim 63, wherein the deparaffinizing and cell conditioning reagent is selected from the group consisting of de-ionized water, citrate buffer (pH 6.0-8.0), Tris-HCl buffer (pH 6-10), phosphate buffer (pH 6.0-8.0), SSC buffer, APK Wash™, acidic buffers or solutions (pH 1-6.9), basic buffers or solutions (pH 7.1-14) mineral oil, Norpar, canola oil, and PAG oil.

66. (New claim) The automated method of claim 63 wherein the deparaffinizing and cell conditioning reagent contains ionic or non-ionic surfactants selected from the group consisting of Triton X-100, Tween, Brij, sodium dodecylsulfate and saponin.

67. (New claim) An automated method of removing embedding media from a biological sample and subsequently providing cell conditioning, the method comprising the steps of:

heating the biological sample containing embedding medium to a temperature at or above the embedding medium's melting point;

applying a non-organic liquid to the biological sample to separate the liquified embedding medium from the biological sample, wherein said non-organic liquid has a density greater than that of the liquefied embedding medium;

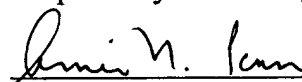
rinsing away said liquefied embedding medium from the biological sample;

applying at least one cell conditioning reagent; and

applying heat to the biological sample sufficient to effectively expose the epitope and/or target for subsequent detection.

68. ☒ (New claim) The method of claim 67 wherein said embedding medium is paraffin.
69. ☒ (New claim) The method of claim 67 wherein the non-organic liquid comprises water.
70. ☒ (New claim) The method of claim 67 wherein the non-organic liquid comprises a detergent.
71. ☒ (New claim) The method of claim 70 wherein the detergent comprises ionic or non-ionic surfactants.
72. ☒ (New claim) The automated method of claim 71 wherein the ionic or non-ionic surfactants are selected from the group consisting of Triton X-100, Tween, Brij, sodium dodecylsulfate and saponin.
73. ☒ (New claim) The method of claim 67 wherein the at least one cell conditioning reagent is selected from the group consisting of de-ionized water, citrate buffer (pH 6.0-8.0), Tris-HCl buffer (pH 6-10), phosphate buffer (pH 6.0-8.0), SSC buffer, APK Wash™, acidic buffers or solutions (pH 1-6.9), basic buffers or solutions (pH 7.1-14), mineral oil, Norpar, canola oil, and PAG oil.
74. ☒ (New claim) The automated method of claim 67, wherein the steps of applying heat includes heating the biological sample to temperatures ranging from about 37 °C to about 100 °C.

Respectfully submitted,


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